VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

IN THE SPECIFICATION

The paragraph beginning on page 5, line 1 was amended above as follows:

(Amended) and is applied at several points over the surface of the heart proximate to or surrounding the portion of the heart whose position is desired to be fixed during the procedure. The instruments feature several suction ports which are brought into contact with the heart, followed by the application of a negative pressure through the instrument, to fix the position of the tissue based on the placement of the instrument. The instruments may also contain a sealed, airtight [,] pressure conducting chamber for operably [connected] connecting to a pressure inlet for communicating the negative pressure to the suction [parts] ports. Alternatively, each suction port may have a dedicated vacuum line attached thereto.

The paragraph beginning on page 9, line 2 was amended above as follows:

(Amended) Referring to Figure 2, a dome-shaped or semi-spherical embodiment of the invention has a plurality of suction ports 2 spaced about the periphery of the bottom surface 6 of the dome portion 8 such that the entire instrument is fixed to the cardiac tissue at the point of each of the several suction ports 2. As with the above embodiment, it is preferred that each suction port 2 be pneumatically connected via an air-tight pressure conducting chamber 4. The base of the instrument is comprised of a substantially flat bottom surface 6 wherein the opening of each of the suction ports 2 is flush at the bottom surface 6. The bottom surface 6 is preferably substantially flat because the bottom surface 6 will engage the surface of the heart when the negative pressure is imposed. Alternatively, depending on the size of the instrument and the location of placement on the surface of the heart, the bottom surface 6 may be contoured so that the suction ports 2 may engage a curved surface of the heart. The bottom surface 6 may also have a separate contact layer 7 to cushion the contact between the instrument and the heart tissue and to facilitate forming a tight seal when the negative pressure is imposed. The contact layer may cover substantially the entire bottom surface 6 proximate to the openings of the suction ports 2. If the material surrounds the openings of the suction ports, it is

preferable that the material not be air permeable to prevent the negative pressure from passing through the contact layer 7. Also, the contact layer 7 may be attached at the periphery of the bottom surface 6. The available materials for the contact layer 7 include the well-known and commercially available medical plastics such as TEFLON®, [teflon, silicon] silicone, and others

The paragraph beginning on page 12, line 6 was amended above as follows:

(Amended) Referring to Figure 4, Figure 4 shows an embodiment of the invention in use in a coronary artery bypass graft (CABG) procedure where an anastomosis is formed between the internal mammary artery IMA 13 and the left anterior descending artery LAD 14 and which is held open by vessel [refractors] retractors 16a and 16b. One end of the anastomosis is sewn to the LAD 14 by sutures 17 being manipulated by instrument 10. A vacuum line 3 is attached to inlet 5, to introduce a negative pressure to the pressure conducting chamber 4. An instrument 10, which in this example is manipulating suture 17 for sewing the anastomosis at the LAD 14, is introduced via instrument port 9a located in the housing 1 of the apparatus. An instrument port 9a has a shaft 18 disposed within the instrument port 9a to facilitate positioning the instrument 10 relative to both the housing 1 and to the surgical site. The shaft 18 traverses all or a portion of the instrument port 9a and may be flexible such that the shaft 10 can be oriented in a fashion to direct the instrument 10 to the desired point within the surgical field. The shaft 18 may also be incorporated into a pivot 24 of any of several configurations including a ball 25 and socket 26 joint having a passage 27 running axially through the ball 25 wherein the shaft 18 is contained in the passage 27 such that the ball 25 is rotated within the